fore the noise subsided, the drummers would strike up the next war song and the dancing would be resumed, shortly to be interrupted again. Dancing warriors might occasionally interrupt the dance to narrate exploits of their own. Finally, the leader spoke of the necessity of the war party and its aim, and ended by appealing to his followers to display their accustomed courage while on the raid, that their people might be proud of them and not consider them cowards.

Shortly afterwards, the leader silently and without ceremony left the dance. The dance continued for a time, but occasionally a warrior and a maiden quietly slipped away into the dark for a few minutes together before parting, for the Comanches enjoined no continence, although they must not be seen leaving together. There might be several parties going out under as many leaders. In such a case, instead of having so many War Dances going at once, each party might end its dance in a short time and make way for another leader and his party. The leader had previously designated a rendezvous outside the village, and after the dance, the warriors returned to their lodges to get their horses and equipment; then silently they stole off to the gathering place. The raid was under way.

Under no circumstances could the War Dance or departure occur in daytime. That was bad medicine. On one occasion a group of warriors held their dance and left during the day. Not a single member of the party returned. The case was never forgotten nor repeated.[8]

Each man who gathered at the rendezvous had provided himself with arms, lasso, food, clothing, a robe if the weather was disagreeable, and horses. The food consisted of dried meat, in sheets or pounded fine, and mesquite meal. Both were very strengthening, packed well, and were convenient to carry. This food was taken only as emergency rations, for they were expected to subsist on the flesh of animals killed along the route.

When the raiders planned a quick thrust at the enemy and a hurried get-away, they left their women, children, and lodges at the main camp and traveled as unencumbered as possible. The leader and men with sacred shields might each take along a woman to help with their equipment, but they seldom exercised the privilege. It was not uncommon, however, for some women to accompany them for the

[8] Informant: Yellowfish.